

# COSMOPOLITAN CHRONICLE

True tales from the annals of history, archaeology, construction, and restoration of the Casa de Bandini and Cosmopolitan Hotel.  
Old Town San Diego State Historic Park

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## Bathrooms : Part II

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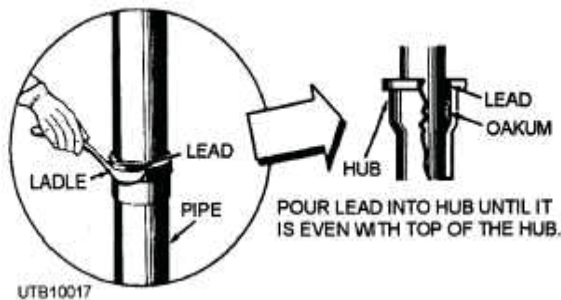
When Cave Coutts Jr. had the first plumbing installed in the Cosmopolitan in 1930, indoor plumbing was coming into its own in rural America. That year almost half of the U.S. population was rural, and the population of the City of San Diego was only 147,995. Even today, the State of Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development offers "zero percent interest, forgivable loans in eligible localities for the installation of indoor plumbing."

Plumbing pipes have been accredited to the Romans, who made them from lead. The word plumbing is derived from the Latin word *plumbum*, which translates as lead. Lead was still used for pipes into the 1800s although in the U.S. until the early part of the 19th century the most common pipe material was wood. Wooden pipes were still in use much later--in Detroit Michigan, over 100 miles of wooden pipes were still in use in the year 1886--and they were still being installed at least as late as 1908. Wooden pipes were either made by hollowing out or boring logs, or wooden staves were banded together much like a long barrel. The first plumbing in the White House had

bored out wooden pipes.

Cast iron pipes were imported from England until the early 1800s when the first cast-iron pipe manufactured in the United States was produced in a foundry in Weymouth, New Jersey. Plumbers in the 1800s could also use plain or tin lined lead piping for cold-water service, or galvanized, enameled or rubber-coated wrought iron piping. Copper was available as a pipe material as well, but did not become popular until after WWI.

In 1930, the plumbing installed in the Casa de Bandini/Cosmopolitan--renamed The Miramar by Coutts Jr.--were unlined cast iron pipes for waste lines, and brass pipes for water lines. The cost of brass pipes was higher, but brass required less maintenance, and lasted longer. Brass pipes are either soldered or threaded--in the case of the Cosmopolitan they are threaded--and iron pipes were connected by packing oakum and then poring lead into the hub of one of the pipes. Oakum is made from tarred hemp. The lead was melted in a small caldron, and then poured with a ladle.



**Sinks.** In both Bandini's and Seeley's time, the sink as we know it was a simple bowl, with no drain or faucets. The Cosmopolitan would probably have had one in every room, and a corresponding pitcher to fill it. It would be emptied by either a maid, or the water simply thrown into the street or courtyard off the veranda. With the advent of indoor plumbing, it was relatively easy to design a drain hole in the bowl, and it becomes a sink.

